

**INSTRUCTOR: TAIWO ADETUNJI OSINUBI**

Office: Arts and Humanities Building (former old Ivey Building) 3G28H

E-mail: tosinubi@uwo.ca Phone: 519 661 2111 x84310

Office Hours: Tuesday 10.30-12.30 Thursday 12.30-2.30 Class Time: Monday 3.30-6.30 Venue: Lawson Hall 2210

**PROVISIONAL SYLLABUS: SUBJECT TO REVISION****ENGL 9131B THEMES IN CONTEMPORARY LIFE WRITING:  
VULNERABILITY & DISPOSSESSION**

This seminar brings the relational turn in Caribbean, African-American and Black British life writing into dialogue with emerging discourses about vulnerability, dispossession, and justice. What, we will ask, is the critical yield of terms such as *dispossession*, *vulnerability* or *abandonment* when set alongside contemporary life writing? To pursue this inquiry, we will analyze selected narratives, read essays on the relational turn in autobiography studies, and develop working genealogies of our key terms. Topics to be examined include: the 2010 Haitian earthquake, the historical legacies of slavery in the Atlantic world, the legal dispossessions and cultural dislocations of migrants, and the transnational afterlives of political struggle. We want to study why authors construct relational selves or adopt autobiographical subjects located within historically determined positions of vulnerability in order to rethink political futures.

## Reading List:

Adewale Maja-Pearce, "Legacies."

Dany Laferriere, *The World Is Moving Around Me*.Edwige Danticat, *Brother, I'm Dying*.Edwige Danticat, *Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work*.Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*.Caryl Phillips, *Foreigners: Three English Lives*.Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*.

Assessment: Presentation: 20%; Research Paper: 60%; Participation: 20%

## Schedule

Week 1 January 4

Introduction

Please watch *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*.

Week 2 January 11

Adewale Maja-Pearce, "Legacies."

S. Smith & J. Watson, *Reading Autobiography*. Chapters 2 & 3.

Julia Emberley, "Indigenous Epistemologies and the Testimonial Uncanny."

Week 3 January 18

Dany Laferriere, *The World Is Moving Around Me*.

Barry Hoffmaster, "What does Vulnerability Mean?"\*  
Ben Wisner et al, "Disaster Vulnerability: Scale, Power and Daily Life."\*

Week 4 January 25  
Edwige Danticat, *Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work*. Chapters 1-6.  
Lily Cho, "The Turn to Diaspora."\*

Week 5 February 1  
Edwige Danticat, *Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work*. Chapters 7-12.  
J. Butler, *Giving An Account of Oneself*. Chapter 1.

Week 6 February 8  
Edwige Danticat, *Brother, I'm Dying*.

Week 7 February 22  
Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*.  
Giorgio Agamben, "Introduction to *Homo Sacer*" & "The Politicization of Life."

Week 8 February 29  
Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*. Cont'd.  
Wendy Brown, *States of Injury*. Chapter 3

Week 9 March 7  
Caryl Phillips, *Foreigners: Three English Lives*.  
Stuart Hall, "Old and New Ethnicities, Old and New Identities."

Week 10 March 14  
Caryl Phillips, *Foreigners: Three English Lives*.  
Paul Gilroy, "'Race', Class and Agency."

28 Week 11 March 21  
Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*.  
J. Butler & A. Athanasiou, *Dispossession: The Performative in the Political*. Chapters 1 & 2.

Week 12 March  
Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations."\*  
J. Butler & A. Athanasiou, *Dispossession: The Performative in the Political*. Chapters 3, 10, 12.  
Alexander G. Weheliye. *Habeas Viscus*. Introduction & Chapter 2

Week 13 April 4  
Eng, David L. "Melancholia in the late Twentieth Century."\*  
Nancy Fraser, *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*. Chapters 2 & 8.